

Sleep disorders may increase risk of workplace injuries

May is National Sleep Awareness Month and the American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine is raising awareness of the workplace hazards employees with sleep disorders may face. They report that workers with sleep disorders can experience fatigue that can result in workplace accidents and injuries.

There are many different types of sleep disorders but the most common one is acute or chronic insomnia. Roughly 23 percent of all workers in the U.S. suffer from insomnia. In addition, more than 40 million Americans have obstructive sleep apnea, which can cause fatigue and other health ailments that increase the risk of a worker suffering an injury or illness at work.

Sleep disorders not only impact a worker's health but it can put them at an increased risk for being injured on the job. Fatigue and stress at work, as well as shift changes and an overall change in a person's work schedule can also impact a person's ability to stay safe while working.

As the workforce ages, it is expected that more employees will suffer from sleep disorders. This is why it is important for employers to address potential safety hazards and issues to keep employees safe and free from injuries.

Workplace safety advocates say that employers should have wellness initiatives that includes a program for sleep disorders to keep workers safe. Some safety groups have said that employers should take a more proactive approach to helping workers live a healthy lifestyle, which can help keep workers healthy and prevent chronic illnesses that may put them at an increased risk for injuries or illness at work.

Source: EHS Today, "[Sleep Disorders Spell Safety, Productivity Concerns at Work](#)," Laura Walter, May 29, 2013